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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6639
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4399
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7560
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1620
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4958
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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7297

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/US, Syria/EU, Syria/Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestinian
Territories (3/13)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on Mar. 13 reported Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad's meeting on Mar. 12 with Ellen Sauerbrey, US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration. Talks focused on developments in Iraq and the suffering of Iraqis at home and abroad as a result of the situation in their country. Dr. Miqdad stressed that the problem of the Iraqi refugees is a result of the war on Iraq. Therefore, he said, the international community must turn full attention to the suffering of Iraqis who were forced to leave their homes and country to escape from the instability and lack of security that Iraq has experienced in recent years. He said the Iraqi government and Americans must shoulder their responsibility and enable Iraqis to return to their homes in a stable and secure climate. A SANA (official SARG news agency) release reported that the US Assistant Secretary of State praised Syria's efforts regarding the issue of Iraqi citizens who have taken refuge in Syria, that she stressed the need for the international community to assist Syria as it bears the burden of fulfilling the refugees' basic needs, and that she stressed the need to create a climate of safety and stability in Iraq to help the Iraqi refugees return to their country.

Papers also featured a statement in Beirut on Mar. 12 by Javier Solana, The European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, reiterating the importance of Syria's role in the Middle East and referring to the EU countries' desire to cooperate with Syria. "We want our relations with Syria to be positive and fruitful," Solana said, expressing hope that former and future meetings "will give new mechanisms in this regard." He added he will visit Syria "with great amity because the EU believes that Syria is an important country in the region and one of the Mediterranean countries that has common interests and programs with the EU". Solana stressed the need to achieve a comprehensive peace in the region on all tracks, including the Syrian and Lebanese ones.

On Syrian/Iranian relations, papers reported a final session of talks on Mar. 12 between Deputy Commander General of the Army and Armed Forces and Minister of Defense Lt. Gen. Hassan Tourkmani and his Iranian counterpart, Gen. Moustafa Mohammed Najjar. During the final session, the two sides stressed the need for further deepening

and boosting of relations between their armies.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad discusses sufferings of Iraqi refugees with Ellen Sauerbrey, US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration. Miqdad: Problem of Iraqi refugees is caused by occupation... Issues of the region are intertwined... Permanent solutions come through comprehensive dialogue" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/13)

"European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana: We seek positive and fruitful relations with Syria" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/13)

"France considers the Arab peace initiative as best peace formula. Paris: Solana will head to Damascus equipped with a collective Roadmap" (Independent Al-Watan, 3/13)

"Minister of Defense Hassan Tourkmani and Iranian Defense Minister Gen. Moustafa Mohammed Najjar concluded talks by signing a memo of understanding. Turkmani and Najjar stress the need for further deepening and boosting of relations between the armies of the two friendly countries." (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/13)

"Killing of five US soldiers in Iraq. The Pentagon prepares a plan for withdrawal. Scores of bodies scattered in Baghdad and Mosul" (Independent Al-Watan, 3/13)

"Secret Palestinian-Israeli contacts to resume negotiations" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 3/13)

"Al-Saniara confers with his ministers today to discuss formation of a second delegation to the Arab summit" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/13)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Towards a New Iraq"

Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, wrote (3/13): "In its statement to the Iraq conference, Syria explained how Iraqis can be saved and how a new Iraq can be built....

"The main problem in Iraq is the American occupation and its misguided policies. The drafters of these policies do not understand the nature and culture of the Iraqi people, which are based on rejection of foreign occupation no matter what pretexts it uses to justify its invasion of their country....

"Out of its deep understanding of Iraq's current situation and the reasons for the crisis, Syria, in its statement, explained the way out of the crisis clearly and transparently: First, scheduling the withdrawal of the foreign forces to end the occupation because it is the main reason behind the deterioration in Iraq. Second: Working to build a new Arab and Islamic Iraq that can only be achieved through national reconciliation foiling the policy of sedition that the occupation has pursued to sow strife among the one people...."

"Open Occupation"

Umar Jaftali, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (3/13): "The announcement that 4,400 additional American troops will be sent to Iraq shows that President Bush does not intend to discuss or schedule a withdrawal from Iraq, and that he is determined, apparently until the end of his term, to perpetuate the occupation of Iraq and steal the last barrel of oil in the

country....

"The American announcement also means that the Bush administration, although it attended the Baghdad conference, is not in the business of rendering the political process in Iraq successful. It will torpedo every national accord based on liberating Iraq and safeguarding it as a united and stable country within its Arab family...."

"The Backyard Garden's Lesson"

Abd-al-Fattah al-Awad, Chief Editor of government Al-Thawra, wrote (3/13): "Change by the Bush administration is compulsory, dictated by the results it achieved from its intransigent policy....

"Here we see the Bush administration, which rejected the part that called for dialogue with Syria and Iran in the Baker-Hamilton report, backtracking and accepting the report....

"But it is important for the United States to realize that sitting at the dialogue table is not a concession it is making; rather, it is a requirement to satisfy the needs of the other side.... Syria believes that the problems of the region are inseparable.

"Visits to Damascus by world officials constitute a kind of public admission that the Syrian vision was largely correct. This necessarily means that the proposed Syrian solution is the one with the greatest chance to succeed....

"If we notice the amount of Israeli anger at Solana's visit, as expressed by the Israeli foreign minister, we realize the extent to which Syrian diplomacy has succeeded. It has forced everyone to recognize the Syrian role and Syrian wisdom. In other words, correcting the mistakes that were made against Syria requires serious and tangible work that takes into consideration the Syrian formula for a solution. This formula, clearly, calls for peace. Those who do not listen to it continue making mistakes...."

"Psychological Warfare"

Dr. Buthaina Sha'ban, Expatriate Affairs Minister, commented in government-owned Tishrin (3/13): "No one in the 'civilized' or 'democratic' world dares to raise his voice on international women's day to condemn the brutal crimes against female prisoners and bereaved and displaced mothers in Palestine and Iraq.... Israeli massacres against Arabs are nothing new, and they have included burying prisoners alive and trading in the organs of dead prisoners.... The revelation about the killing of Egyptian prisoners did not anger the 'free' international media....

"The world remains silent against such crimes because the Bush administration practices psychological terrorism against the world....

"The psychological terrorism that the administration of the world's sole superpower is practicing against leaders, peoples, countries, governments, and international organizations that are supposed to be free and independent is worse, in its tragic results, than the physical terrorism that the Bush administration claims to be fighting, but which it is also practicing...."

Corbin